



TOMALES BAY STATE PARK

GENERAL PLAN

Half a Century of Resource Preservation and Public Enjoyment

GENERAL PLAN NEWSLETTER #1

APRIL 2003

Planning process explores how best to preserve and enjoy Tomales Bay State Park's unique values and resources

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is developing a long-range general plan for Tomales Bay State Park.

The Tomales Bay State Park General Plan will guide the park's future management, development, and public use. Specifically, it will:

- Identify significant natural, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational values and resources
- Determine land use, park development, and visitor activities that are appropriate and compatible with the park and surrounding areas
- Establish goals and guidelines for operations; protection, preservation, and interpretation of resources; and development of facilities
- Determine the potentially significant environmental effects of land uses and visitor activities and possible mitigations

Sharing Ideas at the "Open House" Scoping Meeting

The May 6 scoping meeting will be conducted in the "Open House" format in order to facilitate personal interaction

**Attend the
May 6 Planning Meeting!**

Please join us in planning the future of Tomales Bay State Park.
The "Open House" style public meeting will be held:

**Tuesday, May 6
between 6:00- 9:00 p.m.**

**Dance Palace (old church space)
503 B St. (corner of 5th & B)
Point Reyes Station**

Park staff will be available to discuss and take your comments on:

- Planning goals and process
- Tomales Bay State Park's *Summary of Park Resources*
- Planning issues, possibilities, and concerns

between the public and park staff. We will have planning maps, information tables, and input opportunities arranged according to planning topics. Stop by and talk with the rangers and planning team to share

your ideas and concerns and learn about the planning process.

At this scoping meeting you can give us your ideas that will help us answer such planning questions as: what recreation opportunities are desired; what facilities are needed; what lands require special protection; and which natural, historical, and cultural values should be enhanced or interpreted.

The Planning Process

Step 1: Gather Data for *Summary of Park Resources*

Step 2: Identify Issues, Goals & Potentials

➤ **May 2003 Scoping Meeting: Orientation, Review *Summary of Park Resources*, Issues, Concerns, Goals, and Menu of Possibilities**

Step 3: Complete Preliminary General Plan/ Draft EIR.

Step 4: Public review of Preliminary General Plan/ Draft EIR (45-day California Environmental Quality Act process) (CEQA).

Step 5: General Plan submitted to State Parks and Recreation Commission for approval (public hearing)

Description of the Park Areas

The park is 40 miles north of San Francisco in Marin County, adjacent to Point Reyes National Seashore and near the communities of Inverness and Point Reyes Station. The park is comprised of seven separate land parcels located on the west and east shores of Tomales Bay (see map). The planning team has organized these parcels into five distinct planning areas. The west shore areas include (from north to south) the *Heart's Desire Area* and

the *Inverness Area* (comprising three separate parcels). The east shore areas include (from south to north) the *Millerton/Tomasini Point Area*, the *Marconi Cove Area*, and the *Cypress Grove Area* (a small parcel north of Marshall). Some of the park properties on the east side of the bay are relatively recent acquisitions. The only park areas presently developed for recreational use are the *Heart's Desire Area* and the lowland parts of the *Millerton/Tomasini Point Area*.

Preliminary Parkwide Planning Goals

The planning team recognizes the visual and environmental sensitivities of the Tomales Bay area and State Parks intends to preserve these unique values. Because of these sensitivity constraints, we envision a plan that is *focused on preserving what works well now* in the park and recommending only modest adjustments to park management policies and activities and relatively minor improvements to recreational and administrative facilities.

Based on analysis of information gathered in our *Summary of Park Resources*, the planning team has identified the following list of general parkwide planning goals and **possible** enhancements for specific park areas. These are presented to stimulate your ideas and input and to present a general picture of what general policies, resource enhancement activities, and facility development **could** be included in the final plan.

Preliminary Parkwide Goals:

- Improve protection and management of the park's aesthetic resources
- Improve the quality of the park's stream, estuary, and bay waters and reduce erosion

- Enhance and preserve terrestrial, estuarine, intertidal, and marine habitats
- Restore native plant communities and natural vegetation dynamics and manage exotic plant problems
- Restore and protect sensitive plant and animal populations in the park and work with others to restore and protect local and regional biocorridors
- Improve protection and management of the park's archeological and historic resources
- Provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities and facilities to help visitors better enjoy and understand the significance of the park and area, while preserving the area's aesthetic, natural, and cultural values
- Coordinate recreational opportunities and facilities among the five areas of the park
- Enhance relationships with neighboring lands, land-uses, landowners, jurisdictions, services, and facilities
- Enhance interagency coordination of regional resource and recreation planning, acquisitions, development, and management (particularly in the Inverness Area and along Highway 1)

Menu of possibilities for new resource enhancement activities and park facilities

The planning team has identified the following possibilities for resource enhancement activities and new recreational and administrative facilities in the park. We emphasize that ***these ideas are planning possibilities and are not actual proposals***. When the preliminary plan is completed, management or development recommendations will be presented as broad "Goals and Guidelines." Future resource enhancement

or facility development based on the final plan's goals and guidelines will be subject at that future time to more detailed research, planning, available funding, and public review through the CEQA process. Most of the following new facility development possibilities are related to sites in the park that are already developed to minimize visual and environmental impacts.

Heart's Desire Area Possibilities:

- Restore the natural outlet of the estuary that was lost when the parking lot was built at Heart's Desire Beach in the 1960s. Fully-accessible picnic facilities could be redesigned under the shade of the re-established alder trees. There would be no loss of parking capacity. Formalize cartop unloading and launching area.
- Improve regeneration of the aging stand of Bishop pines at the Jepson Memorial Grove.
- Adapt the former "Bike-and-Hike" campground to a group campground and develop a 15-30 site drive-in campground in the park's current upper maintenance storage lot.
- Redesign the upper picnic area to better accommodate group picnics and special events and to improve aesthetics.
- Redesign the entrance/fee-collection area for more efficient circulation and operation.
- Enhance trail connection with the trails of Point Reyes National Seashore.

Inverness Area Possibilities:

- Enhance trail connection with the trails of Point Reyes National Seashore.
- At North Dream Farm Rd. Property, remove derelict buildings and trailers. A park maintenance facility and/or park staff residences might also be located here.

Millerton/Tomasini Point Area Possibilities:

- At current Millerton Point parking lot, improve restroom and picnic facilities.
- At Millerton Uplands, provide a small picnic and trailhead area for a loop trail with screened parking, pit toilet, and educational panel.
- At Tomasini Point Trailhead, improve parking and trailhead and provide toilet facilities. Consider extension of trail to form a loop and to provide closer views of the wetland for birdwatching.
- Promote a more natural tidal exchange in the Tomasini Point estuary.

Marconi Cove Possibilities:

- Provide day-use area with parking, restroom, educational panels, picnic facilities, and launching area for car-top and trailered boats and sailboards.
- Provide a small campground for bicyclists and boaters.

Cypress Grove: Leave in natural condition.

Summary of Park Resources and Facilities

In order to guide general plan decisions and proposals to preserve, interpret, manage, and create access to the park's resources, State Park specialists inventoried the park's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources.

Park staff will present this resource and facility summary at the May 6 scoping meeting and receive public comment on it. We are particularly interested in hearing your suggestions on information sources we may not know about. The preliminary resource and facility summary will be available on the State Park's web site beginning in mid April.

We're coordinating this planning effort with other agencies

Though the focus of this planning process is on the park itself, to be effective the general plan must respond to important surrounding regional influences.

Accordingly, the plan will also identify regional influences on natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities. The general plan team is working with other public agencies, groups, and individuals to integrate our planning with regional concerns, efforts, trends, and opportunities. The State Park general planning team is coordinating this planning effort with the on-going planning work of the Tomales Bay Watershed Council, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Marin County.

What's Next

After the May 6 meeting, the park planning team will evaluate the *preliminary parkwide goals* and the *menu of possible new resource enhancements and facilities* in the light of the park's resource constraints and the public input we received. This analysis will help us create the preliminary general plan and the draft Environmental Impact Report that will be presented to the State Parks and Recreation Commission for approval at a future public hearing.

We want to hear from you!

If you are not currently on our mailing list and would like to receive the newsletters or if you wish to send written comments, please contact us at this address:

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
Bob Hare, Northern Service Center
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001
Telephone: (916) 445-8911

See Web site for Detailed Planning Information

We've posted a lot of information related to this general planning effort on our Web site. These include:

- Planning Maps
- Charts showing the sequence of planning levels
- Charts showing Park Area Management Goals, Visitor Experience Goals, and a Menu of Existing and Possible Activities and Facilities
- List of Principal Planning Issues
- List of Preliminary Parkwide Planning Goals and Area Possibilities
- Draft Summary of Park Resources and Planning Influences

To review these planning resources, access the Tomales Bay State Park General Plan Web site at www.parks.ca.gov and:

- 1) click on "Planning" (third from bottom left under "Related Links")
- 2) click on "Park Unit Planning" (second item from bottom in center panel)
- 3) click on "General Plans in Progress" (top item under "Related Links")
- 4) click on "Tomales Bay State Park" (near bottom of center panel)



***Tomales Bay SP General Plan
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001***

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